

News

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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN ARIZONA: FOURTH QUARTER 2004 **State wages grow 5.9 percent over-the-year**

In the fourth quarter of 2004, the weekly wage in Arizona averaged \$752, growing 5.9 percent over the year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Arizona's wage growth, ranked 17th highest and was above the national increase of 5.7 percent. The State's wage level remained below the U.S. average of \$812 in the fourth quarter of 2004, close to the midpoint in the nationwide rankings. (See Table 1.)

Arizona has two large counties with 75,000 or more jobs, Maricopa and Pima. Wages in Maricopa County rose 5.7 percent over the year to \$801 and in Pima County, a 4.8 percent gain brought the wage level to \$701 per week. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that average weekly wages for the two large counties were below the national average, though Pima's ranking nationwide fell into the bottom half and Maricopa's, into the top.

Over-the-year wage changes

Maricopa County's 5.7 percent wage gain equaled the increase for the nation in the fourth quarter of 2004, and ranked 134th highest among the 317 large counties in the country. The 4.8 percent wage growth in Pima County ranked 193rd.

Leading the nation in average weekly wage growth was Williamson County, Texas, with an increase of 17.8 percent. Rock Island, Ill., was second with 14.8 percent growth, followed by the counties of Ventura, Calif. (12.6 percent), Henrico, Va. (12.5 percent), and St. Louis, Minn. (11.0 percent). At the bottom of the rankings were five counties that experienced wage gains of 1.0 percent or less: Kalamazoo County, Mich. (0.5 percent), Richmond, N.Y. (0.7 percent), Macomb and Genesee, Mich. (both at 0.9 percent), and Ingham, Mich. (1.0 percent). No large county experienced a decline in its average weekly wage.

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Arizona grew 5.9 percent from the fourth quarter of 2003 to the fourth quarter of 2004, the 17th highest wage increase among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (Colorado, Kansas, and Ohio also had a 5.9 percent wage gain and, as a result, the same

ranking.) Minnesota led the U.S. in over-the-year wage growth at 7.5 percent. Delaware and Virginia were next in line with increases of 7.0 and 6.9 percent, respectively. These states were followed by California (6.7 percent), Hawaii (6.6 percent), and Idaho (6.6 percent). Vermont reported the slowest increase in wages in the nation at 2.3 percent; no state reported a decline. (See Table 2.)

Wage levels

The average weekly wage levels in the two large Arizona counties were below the national average of \$812. Maricopa County recorded the highest average weekly wage in Arizona at \$801 in the fourth quarter 2004, ranking it 120th among the 317 large counties nationwide. Pima County reported an average weekly wage of \$701, ranking it 228th.

Among the 317 large counties in the nation, New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,608. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,460, followed by Fairfield, Conn. (\$1,430), and Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,363). Three of the ten counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), three others were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California), while three more were located in or around the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top ten was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area. At the other end of the wage scale, the lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$500), followed by Hidalgo, Texas (\$504), Webb, Texas (\$540), Yakima, Wash. (\$541), and Horry, S.C. (\$558). The wage level in the lowest-ranked county, Cameron, was less than one-third the level reported for the highest-ranked county, New York.

On a statewide level, the average weekly wage in Arizona was \$752, 7.4 percent below the national average. This placed Arizona 23rd in the rankings among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Arizona's weekly wage was greater than levels in neighboring Utah (\$664, 37th) and New Mexico (\$645, 42nd), but below wages in other nearby states including California (\$928, 6th) and Nevada (\$768, 20th).

Nationwide, average wage levels were greater than \$1,000 per week for the top five in the rankings: District of Columbia (\$1,305), Connecticut (\$1,056), New York (\$1,016), Massachusetts (\$1,007), and New Jersey (\$1,001). Average weekly wages in this group were more than 20 percent above the national average. At the other end of the scale, four states reported wages below \$600 per week -- or less than 75 percent of the national average: Montana (\$572), South Dakota (\$581), Mississippi (\$586), and North Dakota (\$599).

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws. The 8.5 million employer reports cover 131.6 million full-time and part-time jobs. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or States for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at

<http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn03.htm>. Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient BLS Web site location, see <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the San Francisco Information Office at 415-975-4350 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. PT. This release is available in text and PDF format on the San Francisco BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/ro9/home.htm>. Users may also obtain the release from the Bureau's fax-on-demand service in San Francisco by dialing 415-975-4567 and requesting document number 9655.

NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series. The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review, and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and two largest counties in Arizona, fourth quarter 2004²

	Employment December 2004 (thousands)	Average Weekly Wage ³			
		Average Weekly Wage	National ranking by level ⁴	Percent change, fourth quarter 2003-04 ⁵	National ranking by percent change ⁴
United States ⁶	131,560.7	\$812	-	5.7	-
Arizona.....	2,459.0	752	23	5.9	17
Maricopa, AZ.....	1,696.8	801	120	5.7	134
Pima, AZ.....	348.9	701	228	4.8	193

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

⁵ Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for any noneconomic county reclassifications.

⁶ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered¹ employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2004²

	Employment December 2004 (thousands)	Average Weekly Wage ³			
		Average Weekly Wage	National ranking by level ⁴	Percent change, fourth quarter 2003- 04	National ranking by percent change ⁴
United States ⁵	131,560.7	\$812	-	5.7	-
Alabama.....	1,882.0	695	32	5.8	21
Alaska.....	288.4	780	18	4.4	43
Arizona.....	2,459.0	752	23	5.9	17
Arkansas.....	1,149.1	623	45	6.0	14
California.....	15,163.8	928	6	6.7	4
Colorado.....	2,181.7	830	14	5.9	17
Connecticut.....	1,663.8	1,056	2	6.3	12
Delaware.....	418.0	883	7	7.0	2
District of Columbia.....	659.6	1,305	1	5.5	28
Florida.....	7,729.7	736	24	6.5	7
Georgia.....	3,916.5	772	19	5.0	34
Hawaii.....	603.0	723	26	6.6	5
Idaho.....	597.8	618	47	6.6	5
Illinois.....	5,773.7	877	9	6.0	14
Indiana.....	2,883.9	706	31	4.6	42
Iowa.....	1,441.9	667	36	6.5	7
Kansas.....	1,317.5	668	35	5.9	17
Kentucky.....	1,761.9	679	33	5.3	31
Louisiana.....	1,890.3	658	39	4.9	38
Maine.....	600.9	661	38	4.8	40
Maryland.....	2,506.0	879	8	5.8	21
Massachusetts.....	3,169.2	1,007	4	5.6	26
Michigan.....	4,348.5	835	12	3.3	50
Minnesota.....	2,635.3	835	12	7.5	1
Mississippi.....	1,116.7	586	49	4.8	40
Missouri.....	2,670.4	709	30	4.9	38
Montana.....	409.3	572	51	4.2	44
Nebraska.....	891.8	648	41	5.7	24
Nevada.....	1,186.1	768	20	6.5	7
New Hampshire.....	624.0	840	11	6.5	7
New Jersey.....	3,964.7	1,001	5	5.7	24
New Mexico.....	773.2	645	42	5.0	34
New York.....	8,466.9	1,016	3	5.8	21
North Carolina.....	3,844.9	714	29	5.2	32
North Dakota.....	326.2	599	48	6.4	11
Ohio.....	5,350.3	754	22	5.9	17
Oklahoma.....	1,458.8	627	44	5.0	34
Oregon.....	1,623.5	719	27	3.5	48
Pennsylvania.....	5,573.2	796	16	6.0	14
Rhode Island.....	482.6	765	21	3.5	48
South Carolina.....	1,811.0	655	40	5.0	34
South Dakota.....	371.2	581	50	3.9	47
Tennessee.....	2,704.3	728	25	5.5	28
Texas.....	9,479.9	800	15	6.1	13
Utah.....	1,100.6	664	37	5.2	32
Vermont.....	304.7	676	34	2.3	51
Virginia.....	3,568.2	841	10	6.9	3
Washington.....	2,718.0	790	17	4.1	45
West Virginia.....	695.4	620	46	5.6	26
Wisconsin.....	2,755.2	719	27	5.4	30
Wyoming.....	247.9	641	43	4.1	45

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Ranking does not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁵ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.